

Workers' fights boost 'Militant' sales, fund

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Join us in winning new and renewing subscribers to the *Militant* and contributions to the Militant Fighting Fund. Going into the last week of the international subscription and fund campaign, we are well within reach of making and going over our goals.

At picket lines, social protests and in working-class neighborhoods around the world there is growing interest in finding a road forward for working people in face of the attacks coming down on us from a capitalist system in crisis. The *Militant* is an invaluable source of information and perspectives for a class-struggle road

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Cuba defends its socialist revolution in talks with US

BY MAGGIE TROWE

In the five months since Cuban President Raúl Castro and U.S. President Barack Obama announced their countries would seek to resume diplomatic relations, the Cuban people have demonstrated their commitment to their socialist revolution, marching a million strong on May Day. Cuban leaders have made clear the country's sovereignty and socialism are not on the negotiating table. The ball is in Washington's court to unwind decades of attacks and onerous restrictions.

"We don't have sanctions in Cuba against U.S. companies or citizens, nor do we hold occupied territory in the United States which we could exchange for the territory occupied by the Guantánamo Naval Base," Josefin Vidal, who represents Cuba in negotiations with the U.S., said in February. "We don't have programs financed by Cuba intent on influencing

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McDonald's workers' fight 'getting stronger'

2,500 march to demand '\$15 and a union'



Militant/Illona Gersh

McDonald's workers and supporters demonstrate outside corporate headquarters May 20 in Oak Brook, Illinois, as part of growing fight for \$15 an hour and union rights.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY
AND DAN FEIN

OAK BROOK, Ill. — Buoyed by the rising fight to raise the minimum wage and growing resistance to police brutality, some 2,500 McDonald's

workers and supporters from across the country marched and rallied outside the company's corporate headquarters here May 20 and 21. McDonald's stockholders were meeting there May 21.

"I make around 30 meals per hour and earn \$7.25 per hour. I can't even afford to buy one of the meals I make," Amy Petite, 21, who works at Wendy's in Knoxville, Tennessee, told the *Militant*.

Demonstrators said that as the movement grows, gains are being made. "We won better hours and five days a week where I work," said Con-

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Ukraine toilers fight to defend jobs, sovereignty, political rights

BY NAOMI CRAINE

It's been 15 months since massive popular mobilizations toppled the corrupt, pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovich in Ukraine. In their continuing fight to defend Ukraine's sovereignty from Moscow's relentless attacks and at the same time defend their jobs, wages, conditions of life and political rights, working people are increasingly forced to confront the bosses and the government of President Petro Poroshenko. In Crimea, oc-

cupied and annexed by Moscow more than a year ago, Russian authorities have increased repression against the Tatar people and supporters of Ukrai-

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EU rulers plan naval patrols to bar entry to refugees at sea

BY EMMA JOHNSON

In an effort to stop people seeking refuge in Europe who are fleeing wars in the Middle East and North Africa, leaders of the European Union are planning naval patrols in the Mediterranean Sea.

Wars in Syria and Iraq, with roots in the imperialist-imposed borders and tyrannies in the region, coupled with terror unleashed on working people by the reactionary Islamic State, have pushed millions from their homes and out of their native countries.

An increasing number of refugees are seeking to get to the EU countries. Several highly publicized disasters, with boats capsizing and hundreds drowning, have fed into the political crisis of the splintering union.

The response of Europe's capitalist ruling families has been to move to close their borders. On May 18 foreign and defense ministers of EU member states agreed to Navfor Med,

a mission to use naval forces to intercept ships carrying refugees. Their goal is to stop boats promptly after they leave Libya, return the refugees

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Unsealed files show 1971 Attica prison officials' reign of terror

BY SETH GALINSKY

The May 21 release of 46 pages of material from an investigation into the 1971 Attica state prison uprising in upstate New York was front-page news that day. They are a damning indictment of the reign of terror imposed on prisoners after the rebellion was crushed. Similar conditions that sparked that rebellion still exist throughout the prison system.

Thousands of inmates have orga-

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Calgary	50	51	102%
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AUSTRALIA	70	62	89%
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- Workers protest firings, harassment in Liberty, NY

Protests hit new restrictions on women’s right to abortion

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Supporters of women’s right to abortion have organized protests in Florida and elsewhere this year, fighting to stop efforts by opponents of women’s rights to pass ever more onerous restrictions on access to the procedure.

Since the beginning of 2015, more than 300 new restrictions have been proposed in 45 states, and 37 of them enacted — including term limits, waiting periods, clinic regulations aimed at limiting access to abortion and bans on procedures. More than 200 such state laws have been adopted since 2011, making it much harder for many working-class women, especially in rural areas, to obtain an abortion.

At the same time, anti-woman forces have been unable to overturn the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision decriminalizing abortion, nor reverse the majority public opinion in favor of keeping it legal.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin signed a bill May 6 tripling to 72 hours the waiting period before a woman can obtain an abortion. Legislatures in Florida and Tennessee also recently passed laws imposing waiting periods. In April state governments in Oklahoma and Kansas enacted laws that would effectively ban most abortions after 14 weeks of pregnancy.

More than half of states now have mandatory waiting periods. The bill passed by the Florida legislature, which the governor is likely to sign, and the Tennessee law are among several that require a woman to go to two separate doctor’s appointments before they could legally get an abortion.

Planned Parenthood chapters have been organizing weekly “Women’s Act Wednesdays” protests in Florida against the waiting period extension and other anti-abortion bills.

Planned Parenthood wants to keep the legislature out of medical decisions between women and their doctors, Anna Eskamani, a spokeswoman for the group in Orlando, told the press at a March 4 protest at Florida’s Capitol in Tallahassee.

“This law is particularly bad for rural women and for women who are economically challenged,” Barbara DeVane from the National Organization for Women in Tallahassee, told the *Militant* by phone May 21. “You have to make at least two trips, which means double the gas, double the time off work, double the child care arrangements.”

When the bill was introduced, its sponsor, state Rep. Jennifer Sullivan, “started by saying it ‘empowers women,’” DeVane said. “But it takes away women’s control over their health care



In Florida, Planned Parenthood chapters have been organizing weekly “Women’s Act Wednesdays” against anti-abortion bills. Above, picket at Capitol in Tallahassee March 4 where Anna Eskamani, center, a leader of the group from Orlando, speaks to media.

and well-being.” The demagogically titled “dismemberment abortion” bans adopted in Oklahoma and Kansas target the procedure known as dilation and evacuation, or D&E, the most common method used for second-trimester abortions. Of the roughly 5,000 abortions performed

in Oklahoma in 2013, about 5 percent used this method. “This is about preventing women from having the health care and the medical attention they need,” Jennifer Dalven, director of the American Civil Liberties Union’s Reproductive Freedom Project, told *Slate* magazine.

New Zealand event discusses Cuban 5, miners’ struggles

BY PATRICK BROWN

BLACKBALL, New Zealand — “Because the Cuban people and government fought to free them, and because of support from people around the world, the Cuban Five are out of jail,” Cuban Ambassador María del Carmen Herrera said at the May 2 opening of an exhibit of paintings by Antonio Guerrero of the Cuban Five. The exhibition was launched at the Museum of Working Class History, to-

gether with a new permanent installation on Blackball’s mining past, as part of a May Day Forum in this small town on the west coast of the South Island. Herrera said Guerrero’s watercolors, entitled “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived,” depict the “17 months of isolation” the Five had been subjected to after their 1998 arrests and imprisonment in the United States on false charges of conspiracy to commit espionage. “Now the Five are back in Cuba,” she said, “fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Cuban people to defend their revolution.” The permanent exhibition on Blackball’s history includes mining tools, a rat killed and preserved in a gas leak at the local mine and kept as a family heirloom (and, no doubt, as a reminder to workers to guard against leaks underground), and a reconstructed underground shelter for meal breaks. This last item harks back to a vic-

torious 1908 strike, which was fought to increase meal breaks from 15 to 30 minutes at the local mine, long closed. Herrera also spoke on a panel titled “Looking for Direction Locally,” held as part of the day’s events. She said reports in the mainstream media that imply Cuba is heading “to the right and toward capitalism are absolutely wrong.” With the overthrow of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, Cuban working people carried out “land reform and the nationalization of health care, education and the main industries in Cuba,” she said. “The U.S. couldn’t allow a system like this.” The 1959 revolution, standing on the shoulders of others who fought over the previous 200 years for independence, was carried out “to prevent that independence being taken away,” she said. Janet Roth contributed to this article.

THE MILITANT

Support independence for Puerto Rico!

The fight for independence for Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony since 1898, is an important issue for all working people to support. With mounting government debts owed mostly to U.S. bondholders, capitalist rulers there are stepping up attacks on workers’ wages, living conditions and dignity.

Puerto Rican students in San Juan May 13 protest government cuts to education.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Subscription, fund drives

Continued from front page
forward for all those who stand up and fight back.

On May 20 and 21 fighters for an increase in the minimum wage organized protests outside McDonald's headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois, coinciding with the stockholders' meeting there. Fast-food workers and their supporters organized buses to the two days of mobilizations for \$15 an hour and a union. *Militant* supporters from Chicago, Twin Cities and Atlanta joined the actions.

"I've been looking for books like these," Ramona Jones told Dan Fein, as she got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes. After more discussion about the Cuban Revolution and its solidarity with Africa, Jones found a friend who loaned her money to buy *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*. She was one of 15 new readers who got subscriptions during the protests.

More than 60 people attended a May 22 meeting at the Unitarian Church in Calgary, Alberta, where Cuban doctor José de Jesús Portilla spoke about Cuba's mission in West Africa to fight Ebola.

"For many this was their first event in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution," Katy LeRougetel reported May 24. "The Communist League had a table displaying Pathfinder books and the *Militant*, which drew a lot of interest. Seven people signed up for subscriptions and many also picked up books."

Those who subscribe can buy any Pathfinder book or *New International* magazine at half price.

Nyabuoy Gatbel, 21, a university student of South Sudanese origin, got *Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa* by Mary-Alice Waters and Martin Koppel along with her subscription. "I want to know how the transformation is occurring because the problems in Africa are rooted in economics," she said. Other participants picked up a wide variety of titles, among them *Cuba and Angola*, *New International* no. 12, featuring

"Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun" by Jack Barnes; *Lenin's Final Fight*; and *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*.

"We have four appointments tomorrow," LeRougetel wrote, "two with readers who want to renew and two with workers we met door to door who wanted us to come back."

"My main focus is enforcing the union contract and safety on the job," Amanda Hines, a facilities maintenance worker at Boeing and shop steward with the International Association of Machinists Local 751, told Mary Martin when she knocked on her door in Marysville, Washington, May 25. What especially caught her attention was the article in the June 1 issue on how the rail bosses' disregard for safe working conditions were responsible for the May 12 Amtrak derailment in Philadelphia.

"At work people call me over and say 'I don't feel safe.' I look and say, 'Heck, no! It's not safe, and we are going to do whatever we need to make sure you go home safe tonight,'" Hines said.

"Please, put me on your mailing list so I can be aware of things in the world," wrote a prisoner from Pennsylvania. "I'm in isolation, so it will be great for me to receive this." Workers behind bars across the U.S. and beyond have a very high renewal rate and every issue is often read and studied by many other inmates.

This week *Militant* editor John Studer and Frank Forrestal, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and former coal miner, and Catharina Tirsén, a food worker from Manchester, England, leave on a 10-day reporting trip to Ukraine. The annual Militant Fighting Fund makes trips like these possible, and is also a precondition for the generous introductory offer to try the paper for 12 weeks for \$5.

Last week the fund brought in \$17,000, but collection of pledges needs to pick up in the final stretch. Calgary raised its quota, narrowing the gap to our goal, but we're still \$4,000 short. To make a contribution, contact distributors listed on page 8.

'Since cops killed my son, I've been fighting'



Militant/Lea Sherman

NEW YORK — "Don't trust the government! And even less the courthouse!" Iris Baez told a Militant Labor Forum here May 15 titled "Join the Fight Against Police Brutality!" She shared the platform with, from left, Maggie Trowe, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in New York, and Juanita Young and Hawa Bah, two other veteran fighters against police brutality.

Police killed Baez's son Anthony in 1994, Young's son Malcolm Ferguson in 2000 and Bah's son Mohamed in 2012.

"The New York police changed my life when they killed my son. Since then I've been out there fighting," Young said. "Twenty years after Iris' son was killed, we still have Eric Garner," who died in a police chokehold last year.

"The youth are tired, they are not thinking twice any longer, they're taking to the streets," Bah said. "Those in power should watch out, because they don't want another Ferguson, another Baltimore. My people today are the people who fight for justice."

"It's not because there is an increase in cop killings," Trowe said. "To the contrary, it's becoming a problem for the rulers, they're trying to rein them in. But this is a rising movement. It spreads into the building of unions, to the fight to raise the minimum wage, to the question of safety. There are lots of connections between these struggles. They look to each other."

— EMMA JOHNSON

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles
Behind Washington's 'Reset' of Foreign Policy. Speaker: Bernie Senter, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 5, 7:30 p.m. 2826 S. Vermont Ave., #1. Tel.: (323) 643-4968.

Oakland
Defend Cuba's Socialist Revolution, End U.S. Embargo! Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 5. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

GEORGIA

Atlanta
Free Oscar López! Independence for Puerto Rico! Fri., June 5, 7:30 p.m. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia
U.S. Seeks Nuclear Agreement with Iran, Middle East Political Turmoil Grows. Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani. Fri., June 5. Reception, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 3701 Pulaski Ave. Tel.: (215) 225-1270.

CANADA

Calgary
Behind Washington's 'Reset' of Policy Towards Russia and the Struggle for Ukraine's Sovereignty. Speaker: Michel Dugré, Communist League. Fri., June 5, 7:30 p.m. 4909 17th Ave. SE. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

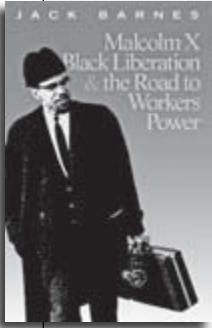
Montreal
Defend Cuba's Socialist Revolution. End the U.S. Embargo! Speaker: Beverly Bernardo, Communist League, participant in May 2 international solidarity conference with Cuba in Havana. Fri., June 5, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

Militant Fighting Fund

April 11- June 2 (Week 6)

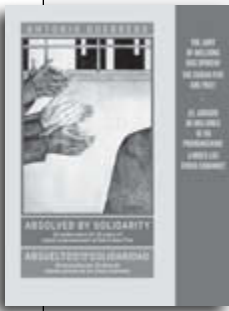
Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
Houston	\$1,000	\$1,265	127%
Philadelphia	\$3,200	\$3,540	111%
Atlanta	\$8,600	\$7,324	85%
Twin Cities	\$3,600	\$2,980	83%
Oakland	\$13,500	\$10,905	81%
Nebraska	\$3,500	\$2,597	74%
Lincoln*	\$200	\$152	76%
Omaha	\$3,300	\$2,597	74%
Chicago	\$10,000	\$6,320	63%
Miami	\$2,000	\$1,260	63%
Seattle	\$8,600	\$5,402	63%
New York	\$20,000	\$11,926	60%
Washington	\$8,000	\$4,569	57%
Boston	\$3,750	\$2,050	55%
Los Angeles*	\$8,000	\$4,256	53%
Other		\$650	
Total U.S.	\$93,750	\$65,044	69%
CANADA			
Montreal*	\$5,160	\$5,705	111%
Calgary*	\$3,300	\$2,575	78%
Total Canada	\$8,460	\$8,280	98%
NEW ZEALAND	\$4,400	\$3,782	86%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Manchester	\$600	\$530	88%
London	\$2,000	\$1,665	83%
Total U.K.	\$2,600	\$2,195	84%
AUSTRALIA	\$1,350	\$1,225	91%
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Should be	\$115,000	\$98,571	86%
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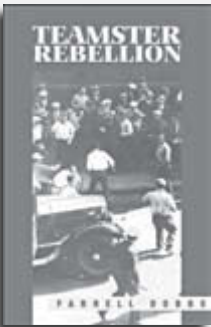
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Ukraine sovereignty

Continued from front page
nian sovereignty.

On May 27 a coalition of trade unions, including the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine and the independent miners union, held the first of a planned series of protests outside the Cabinet of Ministers in Kiev. The demands include doubling the minimum wage, automatic escalators on all wages to offset inflation, payment of outstanding back wages, reversing hikes in workers' utility prices, and restoration of "the social rights and guarantees of workers, pensioners, Chernobyl liquidators and victims of the nuclear disaster."

At the same time, the administration of President Barack Obama, seeking to cement his 'legacy' as an enlightened man of peace, is pushing a "reset" with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Their goal is close collaboration to force a coalition in the Middle East, based on Moscow's allies, Iran and Syria, as well as Iraq, to defeat the Islamic State and achieve stability — and to do so without U.S. "feet on the ground."

The Obama administration has made clear its willingness to accept Moscow's insistence on a "buffer zone" between central Europe and the Russian border, particularly in eastern Ukraine.

This shift was signaled with Secretary of State John Kerry's May 12 visit to Sochi, Russia, where he met with Putin and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. In a joint news conference with Lavrov afterward, Kerry said they found "a fair amount of agreement" on the conflict in Ukraine, which "will be resolved by the full implementation of Minsk," referring to the agreement brokered by the German and French governments in February.

That agreement produced a shaky cease-fire between pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, who continue to receive arms and fighters from Moscow, and the Ukrainian army and volunteer combatants. It calls for the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk currently held by the separatist forces to have greater autonomy within Ukraine, assuring Moscow will continue to wield substantial influence in the region along Russia's southwestern border.

"If and when Minsk is fully implemented," Kerry said, "it is clear the U.S. and EU sanctions [against Moscow] can begin to be rolled back." The Russian annexation of Crimea, which Washington accepts as an accomplished fact, was not mentioned.

"The United States and Russia remain closely aligned" in talks to reach a nuclear deal with the Iranian government, Kerry stressed.

The following day Kerry briefed his counterparts at a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Turkey. At that meeting there was a "slight but palpable change in the overall atmosphere and rhetoric," the *Moscow Times* reported. "No one has mentioned the possibility of sending weapons to Ukraine, and the word 'separatists' has been broadly used

instead of 'Russian-backed insurgents.'"

Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland visited Moscow May 18 for more discussions, and Daniel Rubinstein, Washington's special envoy for Syria, was there at the same time.

The following week U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron and Putin agreed to talks between London and Moscow aimed at greater collaboration in Syria.

The governments of the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are increasingly nervous about Putin's moves to dominate what Moscow considers to be Russia's "near abroad." The defense ministers of the three countries, all members of NATO, sent a joint letter to the U.S.-organized military alliance asking that permanent brigades of NATO troops be stationed in their countries. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said they would "assess" the request, but made no commitment.

Workers squeezed by bondholders

The Ukrainian government faces a June 15 deadline to renegotiate \$23 billion in bonds held by private investors, as a condition to receive the next portion of a \$17.5 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. The largest of these bondholders, U.S.-based Franklin Templeton Investments, leads a group of creditors who refuse to accept Kiev's proposal that they take a "haircut" — that is write off some of the loans.

"Ukraine's debt should be reduced," wrote former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers in the *Financial Times* May 18. He praised the Poroshenko "reform-minded" government for "political courage in combating corruption and moving aggressively to curb energy subsidies," and described the speculators who refuse to accept debt reduction as "selfish" and "irresponsible."

Summers' concern is that speculators' insistence on full payment, bankrupting Ukraine, would be a deterrent to any country's rulers aligning themselves with Washington.

The May 23 *Economist* said, "Ukraine must be allowed to impose a write-off on most of the principal that its private creditors are owed" if "the West" wants to make an orientation to the Western capitalist powers attractive.

The "reforms" Summers praises have hit working people hard. These include

Moscow cracks down on Tatars in Crimea



AP Photo/Alexander Polegenko

Police arrested dozens of youth in Simferopol, the Crimean capital, for several hours May 18 to break up a motorcade marking the anniversary of the 1944 mass deportation of the Tatar people. Russian authorities, who occupied Crimea and annexed the peninsula from Ukraine in March 2014, banned the traditional commemoration.

The Tatars are a Turkic people who have lived in Crimea for centuries. The Soviet regime headed by Joseph Stalin slandered them as Nazi collaborators and deported the entire population — some 200,000 people — to Uzbekistan, Siberia and the Urals. Nearly half "perished in the first two years after the deportation due to terrible living conditions," Mustafa Dzhemilev told university students in Kiev, Ukraine, May 18. "The ones who survived started their struggle to return to the homeland."

Dzhemilev is a historic leader of that fight and the former head of the Mejlis, the Crimean Tatar assembly. He was banished from Crimea following the Russian annexation last year, as was the current head of the Mejlis, Refat Chubarov. "Now there is an air of fear in Crimea," Dzhemilev said. Since the occupation "18 people disappeared and only three were found. The rest are likely to be dead." Other opponents of the occupation have been arrested.

The only Crimean Tatar TV station, ATR, was forced off the air in April. It broadcasts "in three languages: mostly Russian, partly Crimean Tatar, and often a little Ukrainian, which annoyed the occupiers very much," he said.

Last year 20,000 Tatars defied a ban and rallied May 18 in Simferopol. Since then repression has increased, and as many as 20,000 Tatars have left Crimea. Nevertheless, dozens of youth lit Chinese lanterns in Simferopol May 17. Commemorations of the deportations also took place in Kiev and elsewhere in Ukraine, and outside the Russian Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey.

— NAOMI CRAINE

slashing spending on education, health care and pensions; raising taxes, including more enforcement of the regressive value-added tax; and quadrupling the household price of natural gas.

Inflation is rising, and Ukraine's gross domestic product fell 17.6 percent in the first three months of the year, compared to the same quarter in 2014.

Meanwhile, in a blow to political rights, Poroshenko signed laws May 16

banning "Communist and Nazi" symbols and forbidding saying anything positive about Ukraine's history from the Russian Revolution of 1917 to the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991.

These laws amount to "criminalization of certain points of view, with serious periods of imprisonment, and restrictions even on academic freedom," said Halya Coynash of the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group.

Protests force new look at cop killing of Ga. youth

BY JANICE LYNN

UNION CITY, Ga. — Some 150 people overflowed the City Council meeting room here May 19. Most of them were there to support Freda Waiters, whose son Ariston was fatally shot twice in the back by Police Officer Luther Lewis. New evidence has come to light in the Dec. 14, 2011, killing that disputes claims by police officials here.

"I want the immediate arrest of Luther Lewis for the murder of my son," Waiters told the council. "I want the

resignation of Chief of Police Charles Odom and I want a full federal investigation."

Ariston Waiters had run away after cops responded to reports of teenagers fighting. Lewis, who is Caucasian, ran after him. He claimed the unarmed 19-year-old African-American attempted to grab his weapon while being handcuffed on the ground.

Union City Police Officer Chris McElroy, Lewis' supervisor, recently told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and WSB-TV that Lewis initially told him a different story: that he shot the teen because he could not see Waiters' hands and was worried he might be concealing a gun. McElroy said Odom had instructed him not to write a statement and that the chief boasted about helping Lewis stay out of jail.

The shooting has "not sat right with me from the first time I arrived on the scene," McElroy said. "I think Mr. Waiters died senselessly and his family de-

serves some closure."

In addition, the police department's claim that Waiters' DNA was found on Lewis' gun is not accurate, the two media outlets reported. They also reported on fellow officers questioning Lewis' actions in other incidents that had not been previously disclosed.

A Fulton County grand jury decided in May 2012 not to indict Lewis and the U.S. Justice Department failed to press charges. As a result of the new evidence and continuing protests the case has been reopened by the Fulton County District Attorney working with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

"This was a death that never should have happened," Freda Waiters said. "The way his murder was covered, like he was just an animal on the street, that's not acceptable in this world."

"No mother should ever have to lose her child to something like this," she told supporters on the City Council steps after the meeting.

Help send 'Militant' reporting team to Ukraine

A special 10-day *Militant* reporting team of editor John Studer; former coal miner and packinghouse worker Frank Forrestal, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party; Catharina Tirsén, a food worker from Manchester, England; and Oksana Demyanovych will be heading to Ukraine May 28. The worker-correspondents plan to meet with fighters for Crimean Tatars' rights, miners and other workers in Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk, Kryvyi Rih and other cities. To help defray the costs of the trip, please send a check to the *Militant*, earmarked "Ukraine trip."

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today. It seeks to give voice to those engaged in battle and help build solidarity. Its success depends on input from readers. If you are involved in a labor struggle or have information on one, please contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe

British Columbia rail workers end four-month lockout

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — After 119 days on the picket line against a lockout by Southern Railway of British Columbia, workers voted May 4 to accept a new agreement. With 113 of 126 members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 7000 present at a meeting to discuss the proposal, the unionists voted 68 percent in favor of a seven-year contract and began to return to work the next day.

Fatigue is a big issue for rail workers, who often haul dangerous substances through populated areas.

"For the last year they have been forcing people to work seven days a week," conductor Aaron Cruikshank, a picket captain, told the *Militant* in January. "Track maintenance workers are being told if they don't work 16 hours, they'll contract out their work. It's all about the bottom line, not about safety."

Bill Magri, president of the local, told the *Militant* by phone May 19 that the employer agreed to train four engineers in the first year of the contract and two more in each subsequent year to address the union's concerns about massive overtime.

The workers won a 10.97 percent wage increase over the life of the contract and pushed back company demands to eliminate restraints on lengthening the workday, Magri said.

"We are all far more unified," locomotive engineer Craig Graham told the *Militant* May 13. "We were able to preserve post-retirement benefits. The boss wanted to deny new employees extended medical benefits in their retirement."

—Dan Grant

Workers protest firings, harassment in Liberty, NY

LIBERTY, New York — More than 120 Ideal Snacks workers, their families and supporters marched through this small town 100 miles northwest of New York City May 18 to protest the sudden firing the first week of May of some 200 workers, about half the workforce.

The march and rally in front of the plant was organized by the Rural and Migrant Ministry with support from United Food and Commercial Workers Local 888, the Teamsters, the NAACP and the New York Workers Center.

According to the *Times Herald-Record*, the company said the workers were let go when an audit "turned up incomplete work authorization documents."

"We worked in a smoky area of the plant," Alejandro Velasquez told the rally, "and we would ask for masks and the

plant manager would say, 'Buy them!' We had to wear hard hats and we had to pay for them."

"For many years we were under pressure and threats and were afraid to speak up," Araceli Díaz said. "We have suffered years of abuse. The manager has been harassing women. There is no insurance for injuries. This company was built on our backs. ... The least they can do is give me severance pay."

During Díaz's remarks the alarms of several cars in the management parking lot went off and she had to move to a spot where she could be heard. Cops from the sheriff's department stood among the crowd, and several men in suits filmed the event.

"We demand an end to racial discrimination," said the last speaker, María. "We demand a healthy and safe work environment. We demand the vacation earned by former and present workers



Militant/Mike Barker

Rail workers, members of Canadian Union of Public Employees, and union supporters march Feb. 14 in New Westminster, British Columbia, against lockout by Southern Railway.



Militant/Leah Finger

Some 2,000 teachers from area school districts marched in Seattle May 19 during one-day strike for smaller class sizes and increased pay, part of rolling walkouts across the state.

be paid. We simply ask to be treated with the dignity and respect we deserve."

An attorney for Ideal May 15 threatened "swift legal action" for what it called "slandorous statements meant to harm our reputation or bully our organization into unionization."

—Lance Kelly

Seattle teachers strike for smaller class size, pay increase

SEATTLE — Some 2,000 teachers from the Seattle, Mercer Island and Issaquah school districts marched and rallied here May 19 during a one-day strike, part of rolling walkouts across the state by members of the Washington Education Association demanding lower class sizes, higher pay, cost of living increases and increased funding for public schools.

Teachers in some 40 districts have participated and about 20 more are expected to do so in the next few weeks.

The Washington state legislature is under state Supreme Court order to increase public funding by 2019, and a state ballot initiative last fall mandated smaller class sizes.

At a similar walk-out, Kim Mead, president of the Washing-

ton Education Association, spoke at a rally of the Shoreline District teachers held May 11.

"Teachers are taking a stand for students, the community and public education," she said. Mead explained that teachers want cost-of-living allowances that were voted in but later rescinded by the legislature and oppose proposals to take away union bargaining rights and tie teacher evaluation to standardized testing.

Some 4,000 teachers and supporters rallied at the state Capitol in Olympia April 25.

—Edwin Fruit

A celebration of the life and political contributions of

Tom Fiske

50-year cadre, longtime leader and member of the Socialist Workers Party

Sunday, May 31, Minneapolis

Reception 1:30 p.m., Program 2 p.m.

Brian Coyle Center

420 15th Avenue South

For more info or to send a message: Socialist Workers Party, (612) 729-1205 or tcswp@qwestoffice.net

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 8, 1990

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — "If it weren't for the fact that I know I'm in the United States," said Clinton Adlum as he walked down a rural dirt road, "from the conditions I have observed, much of this area could be in any Third World country."

Speaking to a group of 20 Black farmers, Adlum, the first secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., went on to describe the many advances for farmers and Blacks made by the Cuban revolution in the past 31 years. The farmers were members of the Western Alabama Farmers Cooperative.

"In Cuba we have gotten rid of race discrimination," Adlum pointed out. "Of course, there are still people with racist ideas, totally eradicating such ideas will take much longer — but racial discrimination is against the law and that is enforced."



June 7, 1965

NEW YORK — Elements of another social explosion in the big city ghettos are building up. Two incidents in the same Bronx slum neighborhood where crowds of passersby objected to arrests of Negro youths are symptoms of this. Hatred and mistrust of the police are very widespread and deep among ordinary decent people in the ghettos. This attitude flows in part from many incidents of racial prejudice, callousness and brutality on the part of police.

The people in the ghettos themselves are the chief victims of the common crime. Their apartments are broken into with an infuriating regularity. But the police almost never solve such crimes.

Rackets like dope pushing, prostitution, and the pawning of stolen goods flourish more or less openly. The honest ghetto resident concludes that the cops must be involved.



June 8, 1940

More than 5,000 workers of the Federal Shipbuilding Company [in Kearny, N.J.] met on May 30 and by overwhelming majority voted to strike.

They had grievances aplenty, the bosses were stalling, the old contract had expired the day before and a new one was nowhere in sight, and these good union men were tired of being kicked around.

When they voted to strike, they were well aware of the "defense program" ballyhoo. If they hadn't been, their own leaders had made them listen to it all over again, arguing vainly for a further delay to continue negotiations.

The union was asking for 10 cents an hour increase in pay — the men were getting about the lowest scales in any shipyard in the country. The company was "offering" nothing except an increase of 2½ to 4 cents an hour.

1971 article explains ‘Why Attica exploded’

Printed below are excerpts from “Why Attica Exploded” by Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party. The article was first published in the Oct. 1, 1971, *Militant* and then in the Pathfinder pamphlet *Attica: Why Prisoners Are Rebelling*, which is out of print. Copyright © 1972 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Since the rebellion at Attica was brutally crushed on September 13, 1971, thousands of articles have been written about the prisons in this so-called free society. ...

The most reactionary and racist commentators simply attempt to justify the Attica massacre with the assertion that the men caged up there are criminals — i.e., guilty of acts defined as crimes by our “free” society. They are, therefore, not like “other people.” They are “uncivilized,” “antisocial,” and if they are treated like animals, it is because they are, after all, subhuman.

But millions of other Americans were struck by the elementary justice of the demands for which the Attica rebels were willing even to die. They were stunned by the brutal inhumanity of the murderous state officials. ...

One of the recurring topics in the post-Attica commentary on the prisons has been the “new mood” in the prisons, the emergence of a supposedly new kind of inmate. As Steven V. Roberts of the *New York Times* commented September 19, 1971: “A ‘movement’ paralleling those that have arisen in recent years among Blacks, students and women has now begun to emerge in the nation’s prisons.” ...

Richard R. Korn ... observed in the September 19 *New York Times* that “more and more (prisoners) are organizing politically and their political organizing is bringing them closer to the one objective prison administrators most dread: militant unity.” ...

In the year preceding the rebellion, Pathfinder Press received close to fifty literature orders from Attica prison alone, covering titles like Malcolm X’s *By Any Means Necessary*, James P. Cannon’s *Socialism on Trial*, Trotsky’s *Fascism: What It Is and How To Fight It*, *The Essential Works of Lenin*, Etheridge Knight’s *Black Voices from Prison*, and George Breitman’s *How a Minority Can Change Society*. There were six subscribers to the revolutionary socialist weekly *The Militant* in Attica at the time of the rebellion.

A number of aspects of this new political consciousness, militancy, and unity point towards the deeply revolutionary

implications of what is happening in the prisons today. Many of the observers on the scene at Attica commented on the militant class solidarity of the rebels, on the unity in struggle among Black, Puerto Rican, and white rebels, and the apparent absence of racial conflict among them. ...

There will almost certainly be more Atticas. Those who foresee more revolts and bloody reprisals are usually arguing for faster prison reform measures and fearing — correctly — that they will not come rapidly enough. Such reforms are vitally necessary. Every improvement in the physical surroundings, every victory that gains a few more human and civil rights for society’s victims, will help make life just that much more bearable for them. But even the most humane prison is still a prison, and the reason there will be more Atticas is lodged in the very function of prisons in this capitalist society. Such revolts will recur so long as men and women are put behind bars for disobeying the inhuman laws of this society and struggling against its inequities — that is, as long as capitalism remains intact.

What does this society define as a crime? Almost all “crimes” are acts which violate the sacred right of private property upon which class society rests — the right of the few to control and benefit from wealth that belongs to

Unsealed files show Attica officials’ reign of terror

Continued from front page
nized hunger strikes and other protests over the last couple years, including in the notorious solitary confinement units in California.

The documents are from a 1975 report by a commission headed by Judge Bernard Meyer, who was appointed to investigate charges of a cover-up in crushing of the rebellion. The first volume was made public at that time, but volumes two and three were sealed.

Even though highly edited from some 400 pages in the two volumes, the newly released documents corroborate accounts by prisoners that authorities have brushed aside for years.

A state judge granted permission to New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman to release the edited material last year. Thousands of other documents are still sealed.

The Attica rebellion began Sept. 9, 1971, when 1,300 prisoners took over four cellblocks and the adjoining yard, after guards beat two prisoners. Anger had been simmering after prison authorities brushed aside petitions demanding inmates be allowed more than one shower a week and more than one roll of toilet paper a month, better food, an end to censorship of newspapers and magazines, the right to medical treatment, and an end to the fostering of racial divisions by prison officials.

Inmates held about 40 guards and civilian workers hostage, elected an executive council and presented more demands. “Apply the New York State minimum wage law to all state institutions. STOP SLAVE LABOR” topped the list.

The rebellion took place in the midst



Inmates negotiate with New York Prison Commissioner Russell Oswald, lower left, at Attica Sept. 10, 1971. Second from right is L.D. Barkley, one of leaders of the rebellion.

all. “Crimes” are acts which break rules set up to guarantee the rights of a small handful, their right to condemn the masses of humanity to misery, exploitation, disease, starvation, and death — if it is profitable. The fact that the targets of “criminal” acts are most often the poor themselves only attests to the success of the rulers in setting the victims of class society to prey upon each other. Even murder, rape, and other “crimes of violence” can ultimately be traced, almost without exception, to the social inequities, and distortions of human potential and character that are rooted in capitalist society.

The prisons of this country exist for one reason — to try to terrorize people into accepting an inhuman, irrational

social system based on maintaining the “rights” of the few over the majority. Once capitalism is eliminated, once it is replaced by a system which can provide abundantly for the needs of the many rather than the profits of a tiny handful, once we have eradicated all the distortions of human potential which flow from this inhuman system and the institutions that prop it up, there will be no need for prisons. ...

Only a revolutionary upheaval strong enough to take power out of the hands of the Rockefellers and Nixons and place it in the hands of the oppressed and exploited ... only such a fundamental reorganization of society can bring about the necessary changes. That is the “prison reform” we are ultimately working for.

of a rising movement against the U.S. war in Vietnam and on the heels of the mass proletarian fight that overturned Jim Crow segregation in the South and the rebellions in northern ghettos that helped win affirmative action in hiring and education.

The fury of the oppressed

“We are men. We are not beasts and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. The entire prison populace has set forth to change forever the ruthless brutalization and disregard for the lives of the prisoners here and throughout the United States,” L.D. Barkley, one of the leaders of the rebellion, read from a “Declaration to the People of America” by the inmates. “What has happened here is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed.”

On Sept. 13, liberal Republican Gov. Nelson Rockefeller ordered in 1,000 state troops, prison guards and National Guardsmen to retake the grounds. They fired indiscriminately as helicopters dropped tear gas.

Thirty-three prisoners and 10 hostages were killed and more than 300 prisoners wounded. At first the government asserted that prisoners had killed the hostages, slit their throats and castrated one of them. That turned out to be a bald-faced lie. Within a day officials had to admit that all the dead had been killed by the cops’ assault. Barkley was one of the inmates killed after the prison was retaken.

The newly released documents report that James Watson, a National Guardsman, told the commission that “he observed inmates beaten on stretchers, poked in the groin and rectum

with nightsticks, beaten while running through gauntlets, and other severe beatings, including one inmate beaten by seven Correction Officers.”

Kevin Burke, another National Guardsman, “treated wounded inmates only to have bandages ripped off, saw stretchers deliberately tilted, saw guards beat inmates on medical carts with clubs, saw a prison doctor pull an inmate off a cart and kick him in the stomach.”

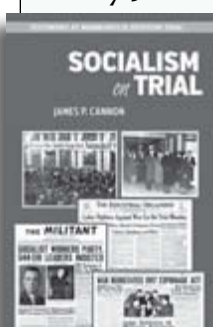
Robert Jenks, a physician, testified that he “was refused permission to evacuate to Genesee Hospital an inmate who had suffered severe brain damage; on the 14th saw people with fractures that had not been treated and people in need of transfusion who had not yet received it.”

The documents include testimony from several prisoners. Inmate Jacques Roberts described “being beaten with rifle butts while lying prone, hearing a shot fired immediately after an officer in an orange raincoat said, ‘This nigger ain’t dead yet,’ having a lit cigarette shoved by a trooper into his rectum.”

Only one prison guard was ever indicted — but never prosecuted — for any act of brutality connected to the re-taking of the prison. Gov. Hugh Carey granted a blanket amnesty for prisoners and guards in 1976.

Conditions in Attica, like other prisons, are pretty much the same today. “The United States Justice Department is now reviewing inmate abuse at Attica Correctional Facility,” the May 17 *New York Times* reported, after three guards brutally beat an inmate in August 2011. As part of a plea bargain, none of the guards will go to jail.

Socialism on Trial by James P. Cannon



The revolutionary program of the working class, as presented during the 1941 trial of leaders of the Minneapolis labor movement and the Socialist Workers Party for “seditious conspiracy.” \$16

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Cuban Revolution leads fight against Jew-hatred

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party have spoken and acted forcefully against anti-Semitism, making a sharp distinction between the policies of the capitalist government of Israel and the Jewish people both there and in Cuba.

The Israeli government has consistently backed the U.S. embargo aimed at overthrowing Cuba's socialist revolution. In 2014, as in past years, Tel Aviv was the only government to vote with Washington against the United Nations resolution calling for the U.S. to lift it.

While Cuba's revolutionary government has strongly opposed Tel Aviv's assaults and discrimination against Palestinians, it has refused to challenge the state of Israel's right to exist.

"I don't think anyone has been slandered more than the Jews," Castro told Jeffrey Goldberg, a national correspondent for the *Atlantic* magazine in a September 2010 interview.

"Over 2,000 years they were subjected to terrible persecution and then to the pogroms," Castro said, referring to waves of bloody anti-Jewish riots in Russia and Eastern Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. "One might have assumed that they would have disappeared; I think their culture and religion kept them together as a nation."

"The Jews have lived an existence that is much harder than ours. There is nothing that compares to the Holocaust," Castro said.

"Castro repeatedly returned to his ex-coriation of anti-Semitism," Goldberg wrote. He criticized Mahmoud Ahmadienejad, then-president of Iran, for denying the organized mass murder of some 6 million Jews, two-thirds of European Jewry, from 1933 by the Nazi regime in Germany, and "explained why the Iranian government would better serve the cause of peace by acknowledging the 'unique' history of anti-Semitism and trying to understand why Israelis fear for their existence."

Goldberg asked Castro if he thought the state of Israel had the right to exist. "Yes, without a doubt," Castro replied. When Goldberg then asked if Cuba would re-establish relations with Israel,

Castro said that these things take time.

President Barack Obama was forced last December to admit Washington's embargo had failed to bring down Cuba's revolution, which — as the 1 million-strong May Day demonstration in Havana shows — maintains the overwhelming support of workers and farmers there. Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro announced Dec. 17 the two governments would seek to re-establish diplomatic relations.

"Will Israel follow the U.S. lead and restore ties with Cuba?" *Haaretz* newspaper in Israel asked two days later. After the Cuban Revolution, the two countries had maintained diplomatic relations until after the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

"I have no doubt that Cuba is interested in ties with Israel," Rafi Eitan, a former Israeli spy and member of the Knesset, told the *Jerusalem Post* after the December announcements. "Renewing diplomatic ties with Cuba depends first and foremost on Israel."

Fidel's support for Cuban Jews

"Fidel had never visited the Jewish community," Adela Dworin, a medical doctor and president of the Patronato, the Jewish Community Center in Havana, told Richard Fellman, who visited Cuba as part of a mission to the Jewish community of Cuba sponsored by a Syracuse, New York, synagogue in 2013. So when Dworin saw Castro at a meeting in 1998, she approached him.

"You've never been to the Patronato," I told Fidel. He smiled and replied, "That's true. But you never invited me." Castro attended a Hanukkah celebration



Ismael Francisco

Cuban President Raúl Castro lights Hanukkah candles at Havana's Jewish Community Center Dec. 5, 2010. Cuban revolutionary leadership has set example in fight against anti-Semitism.

there two weeks later.

Raúl Castro led a delegation to the Patronato in December 2010, donned a yarmulke, the Jewish skullcap, and lit Hanukkah candles. First Vice President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez lit the candles in 2013.

Kosher butcher shop

A March 11 article titled "How Castro Saved Cuba's Kosher Butcher" in *Haaretz* describes how Fidel Castro wrote a letter in 1962 providing for the meat shop to continue functioning at a time when many businesses were being nationalized by the revolutionary government.

Yacob Berezniak Hernández, an accountant and butcher, runs the shop today under the sponsorship of the Orthodox synagogue Adath Israel, which he leads. Once a month Berezniak supervises the slaughter of 60 cows along religious guidelines at a meat plant outside Havana, taking the front halves back to his shop, where he butchers them and distributes the meat free of charge to the city's three synagogues.

Cuba defends its socialist revolution in talks with US

Continued from front page

the situation within the United States or promoting changes in the internal order of the United States."

The White House notified Congress last month that it plans to rescind Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism May 29. No serious effort to challenge the decision has arisen in Congress.

Castro told the press in Havana May 12, "This sort of unjust accusation is about to be lifted and we'll be able to name ambassadors."

Negotiations continue on the establishment of embassies, to the frustration of some in the U.S. ruling class. "U.S. and Cuban Negotiators Can't Quite Seal a Deal," read a May 22 *New York Times* headline following the latest round of negotiations in Washington.

"What we have done in four months — two countries that had no diplomatic relations for more than 50 years — can be considered progress," Vidal told Cubadebate in an interview the same day.

Vidal said the negotiators spent two rounds in January and February getting agreement from Washington to remove Cuba from the U.S. terrorist list and making it possible for Cuban diplomats in the U.S. to get a bank account. Previously no U.S. bank was

willing to handle their funds for fear of retaliation because of Washington's embargo. "Today we can say that these two issues are resolved or very close to a solution," Vidal said.

She told a May 22 press conference that the latest talks had focused on "every aspect of the functioning of embassies and the behavior of diplomats." Washington continues to seek ways for its personnel to interfere in Cuba's internal politics. Cuba intends to take all the time needed to get the right agreement.

'U.S. statements vs. real life'

"To listen to President Obama," following the Summit of the Americas in April, "the purpose of U.S. policy toward Cuba was no longer regime change," Vidal told Cubadebate. "We hope as we move forward in the process toward normalization of relations we see a better correspondence between such statements and real life."

"Real life tells us that they are still asking multimillions in funding to sustain these programs that Cuba considers to be illegal," she said.

As Obama said in his Dec. 17 speech, the decades-long U.S. embargo aimed at overturning Cuba's socialist revolution failed. The U.S. rulers — represented by Democratic and Republican administrations alike

Under Cuba's rationing system, each person is allocated a fixed amount of pork every day, but because Jews don't eat pork, an exception is made for the Jewish community to receive kosher beef instead.

At the time of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, there were some 15,000 Jews in Cuba. Today there are around 1,500 practicing Jews, most in Havana, and thousands more of Jewish descent who are not religious believers.

In 1991 the Cuban government allowed the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to begin sending visiting rabbis, kosher food and pharmaceuticals, and to finance celebrations to mark religious holidays and camp programs. The Patronato hosts Sunday school classes and lectures on Judaism and Cuban-Israeli relations.

"I never suffer any kind of persecution," Dworin told Emily Shire, a reporter for the *Daily Beast*, earlier this year. "My parents came from Poland. I decided to stay, and I made a good choice. Life here is much safer than in other Latin American countries."

for some 55 years — had assumed that the punishing embargo would cause Cuba to implode, like the Soviet Union and Eastern European regimes did 1989-90. But the living Cuban Revolution turned out to be a completely different story.

While Washington's objective remains to overthrow the revolution and restore capitalist relations in Cuba, they realize they have to try new tactics, or risk not only continuing failure but growing isolation in Latin America.

As part of this battle, Cuba's defense of Venezuela against Washington's threats has pushed them back. Last year U.S.-backed opponents of the Nicolás Maduro government in Caracas organized violent actions and threatened new coup attempts. On March 9 Obama issued an executive order increasing sanctions and declaring Venezuela a "threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

"The United States must understand once and for all that it is impossible to seduce or buy Cuba, or intimidate Venezuela," Castro told representatives at the March 17 emergency meeting of the ALBA group in Caracas in response.

Washington has scaled back its threats since.

Cuba, the United States and the Future of the Revolution

Hear Kenia Serrano

President of Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples and member of Cuba's National Assembly

Sydney, Australia Sat., June 6, 7:30 p.m.

Teachers Federation,
23-33 Mary St., Surry Hills.
Tel.: 0413-450-981.

Auckland, New Zealand Wed. June 10

Reception, 6:30 p.m. program, 7 p.m.

Western Springs Garden Community
Hall, 956 Great North Road.
Tel.: 021-071-5495.
Email: cubafriends.ak@gmail.com

Workers struggles exploded following collapse of USSR

In Defense of Marxism: Against the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party by *Leon Trotsky* is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for June. The book explains how the Stalinist misleadership in the Soviet Union led a counterrevolution to throttle workers democracy and destroy the revolutionary program of the Bolshevik Party, but, at the same time, the USSR remained a workers state. It explains why working people had to stand up to growing pressures from bourgeois public opinion and defend the USSR from imperialist attack as Washington prepared to enter World War II. Below are excerpts from the 1995 preface by Doug Jenness that discusses the drive to re-establish capitalism following the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1989-90. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY DOUG JENNESS

Following the disintegration of the Stalinist parties in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1989–90, the new petty-bourgeois regimes in these countries have staked their fortunes on integrating their economies into the declining world system dominated by the imperialist powers and re-establishing capitalism. Dumping any



Stalinist rulers in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe failed to crush working class. Following collapse of these regimes in 1989-90, workers organized strikes, protests and other struggles. Above, August 2009 rally at auto plant in Tolyatti, Russia, against workweek cuts and layoffs.

pretense of building socialism, these crisis-ridden governments have sought to defend their grip on political power and its accompanying privileges by expanding capitalist trade and enterprise within their borders and stepping up the use of market methods and incentives.

The various petty-bourgeois layers heading these regimes have pressed ahead — without much success — to privatize their economies. In their view, the only road forward is to seek incorporation into the world capitalist system, including imperialist institutions of debt slavery such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and even the European Community.

Far from providing the promised abundance of affordable food, fiber, and goods, however, this course has only deepened the economic and social inequalities built up by more than six decades of anti-working-class methods of planning and management. And far from providing a boost to the imperialist economies, it has placed new economic strains on the world capitalist system.

Throughout Eastern Europe and the former USSR structural unemployment is widespread and large inflationary swings are endemic. Food shortages and malnourishment are increasing. Production has plummeted since the early 1990s — by some 40 percent in Russia, 50 percent in Ukraine, and almost 25 percent in Hungary.

Living and working conditions of the producing majority are deteriorating

and cuts in the social wage are mounting. Infant mortality has risen sharply and life expectancy has dropped. For example, in Russia infant mortality jumped from 17.4 per 1,000 new born babies in 1990 to 19.1 in 1993. And life expectancy of males born today is lower than it was in the mid-1960s. A UNICEF report in October 1994 noted that in Russia and Eastern Europe there has been a resurgence of infectious, parasitic, and nutritionally related diseases such as tuberculosis and diphtheria.

Moreover, there is no prospect that conditions will improve or that any significant economic aid from the richest capitalist powers will be forthcoming. To the contrary, the situation for working people continues to worsen as this part of the world is increasingly swept into the maelstrom of capitalism's deepest economic and social crisis since the 1930s. Politically the trend in these countries, as it will become increasingly so in the capitalist countries too, is toward strong-arm Bonapartist regimes, rather than toward bourgeois democracy.

In the face of fierce price competition, rival imperialist governments are being drawn into sharper and sharper conflicts. The governments of Eastern Europe and those of the countries that once made up the USSR will inevitably be drawn into these disputes. In the now-dissolved Yugoslavia, for example, we can see how the interests of the ruling rich in the United States, Germany, France, and Britain come into conflict as

they jockey for position among warring gangs who are attempting by means of “ethnic cleansing” to build capitalism in the territory they control.

The process that toppled or deeply shook the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe culminated in mass protests that began in 1989–90. Unleashing decades of pent-up anger and frustration, millions across these countries took to the streets demanding justice and political rights. The USSR, a prison house of nations under Stalinist rule, was broken up. The disintegration of the Stalinist parties and the formation of weaker and more unstable regimes opened the way for workers and farmers to take the first steps toward becoming involved in public life, organizing to defend their class interests, and viewing as their own the struggles of working people and fighters for national liberation in other countries.

The euphoria of 1989 and 1990 has since been swept away by the intensifying assault on workers' and farmers' social rights, and protest actions today by workers are less frequent. The struggles of the future, however, were foreshadowed in Germany, where workers in the east and west joined forces in 1993 to rally against cuts in social benefits and to strike against wage inequality in the east. ...

[T]his political consciousness has eroded so much under the stultifying conditions imposed by the Stalinist regimes that today there is no organized communist working-class vanguard in the former Soviet Union or anywhere in Central or Eastern Europe. Instead, there has been a break in continuity with the rich communist traditions of the early Soviet government under Lenin's leadership and the first five years of the Communist International.

Workers throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, however, are regaining political room to organize and become involved in politics. They are beginning to resist attacks on their economic and social conquests. It is through struggles like these that working people from Berlin to the Pacific coast of Russia will link up with fights by other workers and farmers the world over, test alternative strategies and ideas, and begin anew the building of proletarian communist leaderships.

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June

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EU naval patrols seek to bar refugees

Continued from front page
to African shores and destroy the vessels. The governments of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the U.K. have pledged to deploy warships in the Navfor Med fleet, which would be based in Rome under the command of Italian Rear Adm. Enrico Credendino.

The United Kingdom is spearheading the effort to get approval for the plan in the U.N. Security Council. The force will operate inside the territorial waters of North African nations and require agreement from the targeted countries.

After more than 300 people drowned off the Italian island of Lampedusa in 2013, Italy’s government launched the Mare Nostrum rescue mission. The navy and coast guard patrolled nearly 17,000 square miles of the Mediterranean with deep-sea vessels, helicopters and reconnaissance aircraft. It picked up some 166,000 people in little over a year. It ended when the Italian government announced in October it would no longer shoulder the program’s \$12 million monthly operating cost. The only help other EU governments had provided was one patrol boat from Slovenia.

A high-ranking diplomat in Brussels reported that the German government pressured the Italian interior ministry to end the rescue operation, according to *Der Spiegel* April 24. German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière described Mare Nostrum as “subsidizing traffickers.”

“We do not support planned search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean,” U.K. Foreign Office Minister Baroness Anelay declared in Parliament last October. “We believe that they create an unintended ‘pull factor,’ encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing and

thereby leading to more tragic and unnecessary deaths.”

Between January and April this year 1,800 people have drowned, 17 times as many as the same period last year. According to European officials, more than 20,000 people have died trying to cross the Mediterranean during the past two decades, making it one of the most deadly journeys in the world.

Last year 626,000 people applied for asylum in EU countries, according to Eurostat. Every indication is that this record will be surpassed this year.

The self-declared government that controls Tripoli and much of west Libya has put up the refugees as a bargaining chip to get international recognition. It opposes military intervention unless the EU agrees to work with it. The territory used to launch the boats is controlled by Tripoli and centered around Misurata. Libya’s internationally recognized government, which is located in Tobruk, opposes the plan.

According to EU regulations, refugees have to stay in the place where they first set foot on European soil. The countries on the outer borders, especially Italy and Greece, have long tried to change this and argued for a quota system across the union. Led by the U.K., Denmark and the Netherlands, virtually all other member states have opposed this.

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime estimates there might be 600,000 refugees on North Africa’s coast who could try to get to Europe by sea, and that at least 80 percent of the people leaving North Africa have paid smugglers or a smuggling network to take them over. For most of the refugees, this is their only option.

Asian refugees at sea offered temporary relief

BY EMMA JOHNSON

After having closed their borders and left thousands of refugees adrift at sea for weeks, the governments in Indonesia and Malaysia pledged in a May 20 statement to offer them temporary shelter and humanitarian assistance.

In the first three months of this year some 25,000 people left Myanmar and refugee camps in Bangladesh by boat trying to reach Indonesia and Malaysia. By May 17 an estimated 6,000 to 20,000 were floating around in rickety boats in the Andaman Sea. At least 300 have died from “starvation, dehydration and beatings,” according to the United Nations.

Most of the refugees are Rohingya, an ancient Muslim people in the Rakhine state in northwestern Myanmar, a country dominated by Buddhists. Rohingya are classified as “non-national” or “foreign

residents” in Myanmar and stripped of citizenship. Anti-Muslim violence led by Buddhist militants has left hundreds dead and forced thousands of Rohingya into camps.

The propertied rulers in Malaysia and Indonesia have refused entry to as many as possible. “What we have clearly stated is that we will take in only those people in the high sea,” Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said. “Under no circumstances would we be expected to take each one of them if there is an influx of others.”

No imperialist power has offered to help. Globally, the U.N. refugee agency estimates that the number of refugees has topped 50 million for the first time since World War II. A record of 30,000 people fled their homes every day in 2014, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Cuba internationalist care ‘product of revolution’

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — There were just 6,000 doctors in Cuba, concentrated in the big cities, when working people overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, and half of those took off for the United States. Life expectancy was less than 60 years.

Today Cuba has more than 134,000 doctors, and life expectancy is 78.8 years. “There are 25,000 Cuban medical doctors active in 67 countries” on internationalist missions, said Dr. José De Jesús Portilla, who served as chief of Cuban medical personnel in the former Republic of Congo in 1974 and in Angola from 1983 to 1985. Cuba’s recent medical contingent to West Africa has helped lead the fight against Ebola there. “None of this would have been possible without the revolution,” he said. Portilla is on a cross-Canada tour titled “Africa Called, Cuba Answered.”

Portilla expressed his pride in “what the Cubans

contributed to the liberation of Angola, Namibia and the end of apartheid in South Africa.”

“Health care in Cuba is not a business, but a right guaranteed in the constitution,” Portilla said.

“Less than 1 percent of our doctors yield to the temptation to defect despite offers of more money and a guaranteed visa,” he said in response to a question on U.S. attempts to get Cuban health workers to abandon the revolution and defect. “And the new generation is even better with more commitment.”

Some 70 people attended the May 25 meeting with Portilla here at the invitation of the Table de Concertation de Solidarité Québec-Cuba.

Portilla also spoke in Vancouver, British Columbia; Calgary, Alberta; and Ottawa, Ontario; among other cities. The tour ends May 30 in Toronto where he will join Fernando González, one of the Cuban Five, at a public meeting during the convention of the Canadian Network on Cuba.

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McDonald’s workers

Continued from front page

nie Bennett, a Chicago McDonald’s worker. “Before we were getting three or four days a week.”

“I was the first one to join,” said Donald Jenkins, 25, who works with Bennett. “At first I was skeptical. Then I got seriously involved. One of the reasons we are winning is because of the quantity of people we have now. McDonald’s is raising wages and we are getting stronger.”

The demonstration at the fast-food giant’s international center was larger than last year’s. The majority of protesters were Black youth. Caucasian and Latino workers also were present, including a farm workers contingent from Detroit.

Many were McDonald’s workers, but other fast-food, health care and retail workers marched too.

“I’ve worked at McDonald’s for two years and still make the minimum wage of \$8.50,” said Brittany Mills, who came on one of the five buses from Detroit.

Three buses came from Milwaukee, three from New York, two from Georgia, and two from Kansas City, Missouri. Buses also came from Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, Virginia, North Carolina and other states. The largest contingent May 20 was workers from Chicago, who came to this suburb on buses.

Participants from New York wore hoodies with “I can’t breathe! Fight for \$15” on the front and “Black Lives Matter. Fight for \$15. Hands Up Don’t Shoot” on the back, connecting the fight against cop killings with the fight for higher wages.

“This is my third strike,” said McDonald’s worker Edica Reece, 26, from New York City. “I am also in Black Lives Matter and have been to the protests against police brutality. We are fighting for what we believe in.”

“I have been going to the protests and joining the strikers so we can pay bills,” said Duane Gary, 29, who works at Checkers in the Bronx and joined Fight for \$15 a year ago.

“Chicago was the second city to go on strike after New York did in 2012,” Chicago McDonald’s worker Anita Alvarez told the rally on the first day of the protests. “We are here because we are winning. L.A. just passed a \$15 minimum wage bill.”

The Los Angeles City Council voted May 19 to raise the minimum wage from \$9 to \$15 an hour by 2020. Almost 50 percent of workers there make less than \$15 an hour.

When the crowd arrived at the driveway leading to the McDonald’s board meeting May 21, they surrounded a giant statue of a McDonald’s worker. A worker jumped on the statue’s platform and led chants.

A delegation of McDonald’s workers delivered 1.4 million signatures on a “\$15 and a union” petition to the stockholders.

“We join you in this fight for \$15 and a union,” Mary Kay Henry, president of the Service Employees International Union, told the rally. “We will make sure every Black life matters, and that immigrant families stop getting torn apart.”

Several speakers from the NAACP addressed the demonstrators.

McDonald’s dismissed the demonstrations as a publicity stunt by the SEIU. “The union has spent its members’ dues money in the past two years attacking the McDonald’s brand,” the company said in a prepared statement, “in an unsuccessful attempt to unionize workers.”

Junova Howard, 24, from Birmingham, Alabama, has worked at McDonald’s for only two months. “Before this I worked at Popeye’s where I made \$7.25 an hour. They would promise increases but I never got it. I saw the fight going at McDonald’s and got a job there,” she told the *Militant*.

“I’ve worked for McDonald’s since I was 16 and I’m fed up,” said William Jeffery Jr., 20, a student and McDonald’s worker in Chicago. “They should pay \$15 an hour. They are international and make a lot of money.” Jeffery’s supervisor called him to try to get him to work, but he refused. “All the managers are working today because we are here.”

Earlier this year after growing demands for a wage increase, McDonald’s announced it would raise pay for workers at company-owned restaurants — about 10 percent of the workforce — to \$1 above the local minimum wage.

Some 750,000 people work at company- and franchise-owned McDonald’s restaurants in the U.S.

Correction

In the article “Protests Erupt After Police Beat Ethiopian Jew in Israel” in the May 18 issue, graduate student Efrat Yerday was misidentified. Yerday is no longer a spokesperson for the Israel Association of Ethiopian Jews, but is active in the struggle.